

Handover Mechanisms in Next Generation Heterogeneous Wireless Networks

A Thesis
submitted to
University of Technology, Sydney
by

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In accordance with
the requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology
University of Technology, Sydney
New South Wales, Australia
November 2008

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged with the text.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Kumbesan Sandrasegaran, who has directed and mentored my research work greatly. Dr. Sandrasegaran helped me in many other ways that supported, encouraged and motivated me during the pursuit of my Ph.D. degree. His endless efforts put into the weekly research meetings have made sure that both the flexibility of choosing research topics and the correct direction could be provided.

I would like to give my special thanks to my former thesis co-supervisor Dr. Tracy Tung. Dr. Tung guided and encouraged me on developing research ideas with her intensive knowledge in the mobility management field, although she left for U.S. at the midway of my Ph.D. candidature in 2007.

I would like to thank the University of Technology, Sydney and the Faculty of Engineering for their support through the APA scholarship and sponsoring my several conference trips.

I would like to extend my appreciation to Rachod Patachaianand for his comments to this thesis, and my fellow officemates: Xiaoan Huang, John Yong, Leijia Wu and Prashant Gami, who have made office a fun place.

Finally, I wish to thank my wife Liumei Lin, whose sacrifice to the family and support during the most difficult time in Australia gave me great encouragement. I am deeply indebted to my parents for their efforts to provide me with the best possible education.

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ABSTRACT

New access technologies such as IEEE 802.11 Wireless LAN are emerging as a new means of public wireless access. Working on public unlicensed bands, they are capable of providing high speed data services, but small radio coverage. The third generation cellular networks such as Universal Mobile Telecommunications System (UMTS) provide wide radio coverage, but have limited data rates. An integration of these heterogeneous wireless networks is expected to be an effective means of providing high speed data access in wide radio coverage in the Next Generation (NG) wireless networks. When a mobile user moves across these networks, it has to perform handover to maintain its services. During a handover, it is pivotal to guarantee both service continuity and service quality, which ensure that handover can be made seamlessly. To provide ubiquitous services, an extensive collaboration between network operators is anticipated to be an economic solution. Providing seamless handover and ubiquitous services in heterogeneous wireless networks presents many new research challenges.

The objective of this thesis is to develop new handover management techniques for supporting seamless handover and facilitating ubiquitous services in heterogeneous wireless networks. More specifically, new techniques for dealing with the extensive collaboration of NG network operators, and new techniques that enable the interworking of heterogeneous wireless technologies.

Regarding the extensive collaboration of network operators, a neighbour network trust information retrieval scheme is proposed for global roaming. With this scheme, an access network can obtain network trust information of its nearby access networks without relying on direct links with them. The retrieved trust information can be provided to an attached mobile user later to assist it with global roaming. Next, a handover decision algorithm that uses network trust information is presented. The proposed algorithm guarantees much more reliable handover in a multiple-operator

environment. It is demonstrated how quality of service is maintained and overall network load is balanced using the proposed handover algorithm. The thesis moves further to a proxy based authentication localisation scheme that focuses on the handover across two networks without a trust relation. The proposed scheme provides a secure and effective method of localising authentication at a third-party entity during a handover. This avoids resorting to a mobile's home network for identity verification in a handover, and thus, greatly reduces handover latency.

In terms of the interworking of heterogeneous wireless technologies, the thesis presents a multi-interface mobile terminal model for media independent handover. The presented model addresses the challenge of working with heterogeneous wireless technologies from the perspective of a mobile terminal. Under the proposed multi-interface architecture, a mobile terminal can work with multiple network interfaces, and still uses common upper layer protocols such as Mobile IPv4. Being compatible with IEEE 802.21 framework, it uses a cross-layer design approach.